



IRAQ GOVERNANCE STRENGTHENING PROJECT (GSP/ TAQADUM)

Annual Report on Lessons Learned and Best Practices (2015)

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Acronyms

COMSEC	Council of Ministers Secretariat
COR	Council of Representatives
FAD	Financial Affairs Department
DG	Director General
DMAT	Decentralization Mapping and Analysis Tool
ESDO	Essential Service Delivery Oversight
FAD	Financial Affairs Department
GO	Governor's Office
GOI	Government of Iraq
GSP	Governance Strengthening Project
GSP/Taqadum	Governance Strengthening Project/Taqadum
HCCP	High Commission for Coordination between Provinces
HCCPSEC	High Commission for Coordination between Provinces' Secretariat
ICI	Intergovernmental Coordination Implementation
ICIP	Intergovernmental Coordination Implementation Plan
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IDS	Iraq Development and Sustainability
ISIL	The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
Law 21	Provincial Powers Act (2008) or "Transfer of Functions" Law, calling for decentralization of the government and the transfer of suitable ministerial "functions" to the provincial governments
LT	Long-term
MCHPM	Ministry of Construction, Housing, and Public Municipalities
MMPW	Ministry of Municipalities & Public Work
MOCH	Ministry of Construction and Housing
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOLSA	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
MOP	Ministry of Planning
MOU	Memorandum Of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OD	Organizational Development
PC	Provincial Council
PM	Prime Minister
PMAC	Prime Minister's Advisory Council
PPDC	Provincial Planning and Development Councils

PPL	Provincial Powers Law
SC	Sectoral Subcommittee
SD	Service Delivery
SDI	Service Delivery Improvement
SDIP	Service Delivery Improvement Plan
SDIPIC	Service Delivery Improvement Plan Implementation Committee
SDIPDC	Service Delivery Improvement Plan Development Committee
SDPS	Service Delivery Performance Standards
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SOW	Scope of Work
SP	Strategic Plan
ST	Short-term
STTA	Short-term Technical Assistance
TA	Technical Assistance
Taqadum	Arabic for “moving forward”
TF	Provincial Task Force
TOT	Training of Trainers
TSI	Technical Support to Iraq (Program)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

I. INTRODUCTION

As per Section F.7.A. (d), Chemonics provides its **Annual Report on Lessons Learned and Best Practices** for the Governance Strengthening Project - “Taqadum” (GSP/Taqadum), under Contract No. AID-267-C-11-00006. This document reflects on lessons learned in the previous year of project implementation and provides information and insight explaining why the proposed course of action in the consecutive annual work-plan is justifiable.

The goal of this document is to capture best practices developed by GSP/Taqadum over the course of the fourth year of implementation, from October 2014 to September 2015. Programming in a conflict environment results in special challenges, and GSP/Taqadum adapted to address these challenges with a number of innovative approaches. In an effort to address two distinct but overlapping spheres of activity, this document is divided into two parts: 1) best practices related to the implementation of program activities and 2) best practices for overall project management.

II. BACKGROUND

In September 2011, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) launched GSP/Taqadum. GSP/Taqadum is designed to enable provincial and local governments to respond more effectively to community needs. The project has two components:

Component I: *Institutional Strengthening. Institutionalize provincial and local governments' core authorities and responsibilities.*

Component II: *Executive Oversight. Provincial and local elected officials hold executive ministries accountable for improved services.*

Under each component, GSP/Taqadum promotes provincial and local government institutional development to build constructive provincial council and governor office capacity and oversight mechanisms. Activities are Iraqi-led, supporting government and civil society efforts to strengthen the responsiveness of provincial and local governments to community needs. As of July 1, 2014, GSP/Taqadum shifted its objective to focus on the administrative decentralization of three out of eight ministries slated for decentralization – Health, Education, and Municipalities and Public Works – and working with five targeted provinces (Baghdad, Babil, Najaf, Diwaniyah, and Wasit). With its new mandate to prepare for the scheduled August 2015 devolution of powers from Iraq’s central ministries to provincial governments, Governorates were primed to accept the authority and embrace the responsibility of improving public services for citizens. GSP/Taqadum management and leading technical team members moved early on to prepare themselves for the task ahead, identifying staff resources and adjusting their respective departmental plans as needed. Two additional provinces – Diyala and Kirkuk – were added to GSP/Taqadum’s work plan as of October 2014. As of June 1, 2015, the rest of the 15 remaining provinces were added to GSP/Taqadum’s work plan.

III. DEFINITIONS

Within the context and comprehension of this report, *Best Practices* refers to a systematic procedure that yields results superior to those achieved by other means; and *Lessons Learned* is knowledge gained through experience, which when shared, benefits the work of others. The lessons learned can be either a good experience to follow or a bad experience to avoid.

IV. OVERALL TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT OF THE PROJECT

A. Project Design

GSP/Taqadum's project design and approach for Year 4 underwent major changes when two provinces (Diyala and Kirkuk) then the remaining eight provinces (Basrah, Maysan, DhiQar, Muthanna, Karbala, Anbar, Ninewa, and Salah ad Din) were added to the original roster of five that GSP/Taqadum's work plan targeted for the development of Intergovernmental Coordination Improvement Plans (ICIPs) and Service Delivery Improvement Plans (SDIPs). The new work plan incorporated the implementation of ICIPs and the transfer of functions from the three ministries to the provinces in addition to getting consensus on the ICIP developed in cooperation with the five provinces where ICIPs had been developed to include all 15 provinces. GSP/Taqadum put forward a road map mechanism to facilitate the transfer of functions to the provinces to include the development of organizational charts for each governorate and roles and responsibilities of the Governor's Office (GO), Provincial Council (PC) and directorates. The project was also tasked with identifying the laws and regulations that are in conflict with law 21 as amended, and helping to establish a financial affairs directorate and local revenue generation units. In addition, the new work plan calls for the implementation of short-term solutions listed in the service delivery improvement plans to improve service delivery.

B. Project Management

Project staff. In Year 4, GSP/Taqadum re-established embedded offices in 12 out of the 15 Iraqi provinces, with the exception of Anbar, Salah ad Din, and Ninewa due to continuing operations against ISIL. GSP/Taqadum continued its effort to strengthen the relationships that were established with Iraqi officials in all 15 provinces. The embedded offices allow GSP/Taqadum embedded teams to work side-by-side with PC, GO, and directorates staff from the three ministries on a daily basis to facilitate easier access to key officials. This has contributed to strengthening the trusting relationship that GSP/Taqadum enjoys within the provinces. Regarding the three northern provinces, GSP/Taqadum had to tailor efforts due to the ongoing occupation by the terrorist forces of ISIL by meeting regularly with a provincial representative either remotely or in locations outside the respective provinces.

GSP/Taqadum uses a matrix of organizational structure to provide the flexibility to adapt to the dynamic operating context of Iraq while maintaining geographic reach and technical depth. Each technical specialist within an embedded provincial team directly reports to an embedded

provincial coordinator and receives technical directions, training, materials, action plans, and follow-up from a GSP/Taqadum national lead specialist. Each embedded team receives management and operational support from a hub. The project has hubs in Baghdad, Hilla, and Erbil. This kind of matrix setup also reduces dependence upon individual team members, minimizing the impact of employee turnover, enabling the project to focus resources where they are needed and adjust the mix of resources and activities according to technical needs.

The project national lead technical specialists consist of lead subject matter experts in all program activities, such as administrative, legal, financial, and service delivery sectors, and ministry liaison efforts. Regional managers, based in GSP/Taqadum's hubs in Baghdad and Hilla oversee the work of GSP/Taqadum's provincial teams. Baghdad hub regional managers oversee the central and the northern province (Baghdad, Diyala, Anbar, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah ad Din) activities, and the Hilla hub regional manager oversees the southcentral and southern province (Babil, Najaf, Karbala, Wasit, Diwaniya, Muthana, DhiQar, Maysan, and Basrah) activities. The operating hubs provide technical support and guidance to the embedded teams in the provinces and provide management oversight of the hubs and play a coordinating role to ensure efficient and effective deployment of resources and program activities. In the provinces, the embedded teams are comprised of a regional coordinator who leads a team of specialists that has been assigned to meet the provincial government's capacity building and technical assistance needs.

Another tool and resource that has proven especially effective is engaging and leveraging the resources and input of Chemonics' home office based team. GSP/Taqadum has developed a robust system for coordination between the Washington, DC-based home office and field office leadership. This includes daily emails and a weekly Skype call in addition to ad hoc phone calls.

Long and short term expatriate positions. Living conditions in Baghdad are contained, security concerns create unprovoked stress, and other challenges make this a unique operating environment that does not necessarily work well for all individuals. During its fourth year of implementation, GSP/Taqadum continued to implement a dynamic recruitment and hiring approach reflective of the operating environment in Iraq that allows international staff to manage the challenges of transitioning to the project. All staff are provided with information about life on the Baghdad compound and are given access to resources to support mental and physical well-being as part of GSP/Taqadum's onboarding process. Additionally, the emphasis was placed on hiring staff that have experience living in compounds or have fluency in Arabic as it allows for a more smooth adjustment period.

After ISIL took over three provinces in Iraq in 2014, all expats moved out of Baghdad to relocate permanently in Erbil. The chief of party and all expatriates are working from Erbil hub with frequent visits to Baghdad to run program's activities. The COP provides overall technical direction and management in coordination with USAID/Iraq.

GSP/Taqadum has used international short-term technical advisors who bring significant knowledge supporting local governance in challenging operating environments. These advisors came with a wide knowledge and expertise in different program activities such as financial,

organizational development and post-conflict monitoring and assessment. During Year 4, most of the advisors worked out of Erbil.

Stakeholder and partner communications. The importance of building and maintaining professional relationships cannot be overstated. While Skype, mobile phones, and email are necessary forms of communication, nothing replaces face-to-face meetings. Regular in-person meetings are critical and are prioritized even when they are logistically burdensome or time-consuming, particularly when new initiatives are being designed, or the project is expanding to a new area, and stakeholder feedback on needs and project performance is essential for success.

GSP/Taqadum makes a concerted effort to schedule regular, face-to-face meetings with its stakeholders. Similarly, GSP/Taqadum's embedded approach to its technical scope has created a highly communicative relationship with its stakeholders in various Iraqi GOs and PCs. The project's embedded provincial teams work side-by-side with their government counterparts, thereby facilitating technical as well as administrative dialogue. Provincial teams then relay recommendations they receive from interacting with PC and GO personnel on a daily basis to GSP/Taqadum's hubs.

GSP/Taqadum provides personalized and on-demand program interventions. The COP regularly meets with many national and provincial leaders. Provincial coordinators and regional managers drive the ongoing relationships and work to maintain stakeholder buy-in and commitment as technical work progresses. In addition, GSP/Taqadum continues to coordinate with other governance and capacity building implementers, such as the World Bank, DFID, Canadian-funded implementers, UNDP, and UK-Based Global Partners.

Risk mitigation. The Iraq security situation especially after ISIL took over the three provinces, presents challenges to GSP/Taqadum. The move of expatriate staff to Erbil who manage activities remotely with frequent visits to Baghdad has been successful in implementing program activities while minimizing the risk. GSP/Taqadum has learned several critical lessons that enabled a more efficient security platform and maximized technical assistance activities. Open and clear communication between all levels of security personnel and project staff is the core of a robust security platform. While this may be intuitive, GSP/Taqadum found that developing the right vehicle for open communication between all parties was critical to the success of the project. Pre- and post-deployment briefings for new expatriate and short term staff set expectations for life and work in Iraq and developed an understanding of the security platform, allowing for an easier transition to the new operating environment and more efficient programming. Close coordination of initiatives with the security provider and the home office team has also enabled GSP/Taqadum to redistribute additional resources for the most critical needs while still providing the necessary level of support for the rest of the project.

V. IMPLEMENTATION OF TECHNICAL PROGRAMMING ACTIVITIES

Tools and Techniques that Led to Best Practices

ICIP and SDIP development. During Year 4, we began expanding the decentralization mandate to other provinces. Ten more provinces were added to the original list of five, when the change to the original scope began in July 2014. The addition of the ten was split into two stages. The first one took place on September 28, 2014, with the addition of two provinces (Diyala and Kirkuk) and the second one took place on May 22, 2015 (Basrah, Dhi Qar, Maysan, Muthanna, Karbala, Anbar, Salah ad Din, and Ninewa). Our work plan outlines working with three of the eight ministries mentioned in Law 21 as amended (Health, Education, and Municipalities and Public Work). Similar to the original five provinces, GSP/Taqadum staff has used the same approach with the remaining ten.

The project's general approach is to help provinces prepare an effective transition plan for the transfer of ministerial functions to provinces and take steps for developing a service delivery improvement plan, given the decentralization challenges and legal, financial, and administrative opportunities. The project prepared its decentralization mapping and analysis plans (DMAPs), rolling them out to stakeholders, and seeking consensus on next steps. The DMAPs identified, analyzed, and determined transferable ministerial functions. In addition, the project has used the Gap Analysis Tool (GAT) to identify the elements most affecting the services and rank them according to their effect. The newly added provinces were paired with the original five. This pairing – just one aspect of the project comprehensive and unified Intergovernmental Coordination Improvement Plan (ICIP) aimed at replicating the project results in these added provinces – fosters cross-province exchanges of ideas, knowledge, tools, methods, practices, and suggestions.

Real world experience. GSP/Taqadum has exposed our counterparts within the Iraqi local and central governments to real world examples of similar decentralization experiences. We conducted a study tour in Indonesia to get acquainted with Indonesia's experience in implementing decentralization. Iraqi officials visited facilities and conducted meetings with Indonesian officials from different ministries to be familiar with mechanisms, structures and processes adopted in shifting to decentralization in order to promote decentralization efforts. Participants learned that Indonesian local governments have become more responsive to citizen needs and brought public decision making closer to people. They also found that provinces become economically active and are competing with each other.

Customized training and technical assistance. Several capacity development events and hands-on workshops took place in the provinces, regionally, and nationally. By the end of Year 4, GSP/Taqadum successfully met its objective by bringing all provinces up to date on all aspects of GSP/Taqadum's efforts and goals.

GSP/Taqadum provided customized training and technical assistance to governmental individuals from 15 targeted governorates, including directorate officials on their roles and responsibilities under Law 21 and its second amendment and began the process to reach an agreement

between central and provincial governments on which functions to be transferred immediately, after six months, and longer periods depending on capacity needs and other legal restrictions for the three targeted ministries of Health, Education, and Ministry of Municipalities & Public Work (MMPW).

To expedite development of ICIP in the five new southern targeted provinces plus the three ISIL-controlled provinces, GSP/Taqadum used a mobile team to start working with officials in each province to fast-track phases that were used with the original five provinces. A mobile team from national technical staff and the south central region visited Karbala, Muthanna, Dhi Qar, Maysan, and Basrah developing the capacity of the embedded staff in these provinces as well. GSP/Taqadum staff in the central region did the same in the three ISIL-controlled provinces Anbar, Ninewa, and Salah Ad Din for the development of ICIPs.

Decentralization Mapping Analysis Plan (DMAP). The DMAP is the core of intergovernmental coordination process, and it is supported by financial, administrative, and legal frameworks. The DMAP was created by GSP/Taqadum to identify, analyze, and help determine transferable ministerial functions. The DMAPs for all sectors under the three targeted ministries were submitted to the High Commission for Coordination between Provinces (HCCP) by the provinces in 2015.

Developing the DMAP is a systematic and scientific methodology on how to identify, analyze, and determine transferable ministerial functions based on certain criteria and use capacity elements to determine the gradual transfer of the functions; immediately, after six months, a year or longer. This resulted in making the local governments replicate this system with other non-targeted ministries by GSP/Taqadum.

Ministry and local Government collaboration. Leveraging technical expertise, decades of shared experience, and a deep commitment to support Iraq's decentralization process in ways that are best for the country and its citizens, our overall goal was and remains, to prepare plans whereby Article 45 of Law 21, as amended, (also known as the Provincial Powers Act (2008) or "Transfer of Functions" Law), is implemented. Achieving this goal includes building the capacity of the provincial directorates and Governor's Offices to receive and perform the functions transferred efficiently and effectively.

After outlining the functional mapping and analysis approach and efforts to bring ministries and provinces together to build consensus on the transfer of functions, local governments took control of governing their provinces. The MMPW agreed with provinces on all devolved and retained functions with the exception of four disputed functions.

GSP/Taqadum provided technical assistance to facilitate a seamless transition of ministry functions to the provinces that are fully equipped with the capacity and knowledge to provide better services.

Administrative framework. GSP/Taqadum is providing hands-on "learning-by-doing" capacity development. GSP/Taqadum managed to train PC, GO, and Directorates of three

ministries (Health, Education, and MMPW) on process mapping the functions that involve citizen-centered services. GSP/Taqadum managed to have provinces map out 50 functions through the end of September 2015, and many more are underway. To avoid duplication and leverage resources, each directorate will be assigned specific functions and then share the results of their process mapping and streamlining efforts with other provinces. Citizen-centered functions will be given priority. The process map will be posted on the provincial government website to allow citizens to have access to information.

Financial Framework

GSP/Taqadum has been assisting the governments in establishing revenue generation systems. GSP/Taqadum trains provincial governments on the guiding principles, structures, and collection mechanisms for user fees and other revenue collection; including taking steps to create an enabling legal environment to facilitate direct payments, and conducting public surveys to determine constituents' willingness to pay for clearly identified services. During Year 4, a total of four GOs established Local Revenue Units (LRU). This unit is responsible for local revenue generation and collection.

Also, GSP/Taqadum is developing a capital budgeting process to meet community needs. This process is institutionalized through PC mandates allowing for citizen input into the decision-making process and holding the provincial government accountable for operating and capital budgets.

GSP/Taqadum assisted provinces in setting up the Provincial Financial Affairs Directorate (FAD) through establishing two units: one for budgeting and the other for accounting, which will be technically accountable to the Ministry of Finance (MOF) (compliance with rules and regulations, reporting, and audit) and administratively to the GO. During Year 4, 11 GOs established FADs. At the same time, the treasury division of the proposed directorate provides the same functions as before to the other line ministries that are not subject to decentralization. The establishment and functioning of the FAD will enhance financial reporting, monitoring and auditing processes, all of which will ultimately provide better local financial management and accountability systems.

Legal framework. GSP/Taqadum succeeded to build consensus among 10 governorates to draft amendments to 35 conflicting laws with decentralization (including 131 articles) and have PCs, and/or GOs send official letters to the COM and/or the COR during FY2015. In addition, GSP/Taqadum assisted the GOs and directorates in defining their roles, responsibilities, authorities, and working relations through on-the-job training and institutionalizing it through written policy. Ultimately, GSP/Taqadum will assist national and provincial governments with both executive and legislative branches to develop and institutionalize through local legislation the monitoring roles, responsibilities, and accountability framework among them.

Service delivery. Service Delivery Improvement Plans (SDIPs) were developed in the targeted five provinces then Diyala and Kirkuk were added addressing service delivery in water, sewer, municipality, and primary health care and primary schools sectors. Each plan is unique to its respective province and sector, and the provincial directorates submitted their SDIPs to their

respective governors and councils that adopted them. A total of 638 short-term improvement actions were recommended: 124 (health), 119 (education) and 395 (municipality). Additionally, 575 long-term improvement actions were listed: 115 (health), 113 (education) and 347 (municipality). These solutions are recommended to fill the gaps of services indicators that were identified in the SDIPs of each province. The formation of SDIP Implementation Committees (SDIPICs) in the seven targeted provinces contributed greatly to the development of action plans aimed at implementing the short-term solutions cited in the SDIPs. All provincial SDIPICs completed their respective action plans and had begun to implement their short-term solutions. Efforts were exerted to develop a higher level of intergovernmental cooperation in implementing the SDIPs in these seven provinces. GSP/Taqadum managed to have the targeted governments implement the short-term solutions approved by the local governments and directorates of the seven provinces: Wasit, Najaf, Kirkuk, Diyala, Diwaniyah, Baghdad, and Babil.

GSP/Taqadum began efforts to replicate its service delivery process (previously completed at the beginning of FY2015 with the seven initially targeted provinces in the newly added five southern and south-central provinces of Basrah, Dhi Qar, Maysan, Muthanna, and Karbala. All information gleaned from GSP/Taqadum's efforts with the seven initially targeted provinces were shared in the hope the newly targeted provinces would emulate those efforts.

Five SDIPDCs were established in the five southern provinces. In addition, five liaison staff members were named by each directorate of water, sewage, municipality, education, and health in these five provinces, and GSP/Taqadum trained the committees to begin development of the SDIPs with the assistance of governor-assigned coordinators for each sector.

Due to project resource constraints, the staff resources in the newly targeted five provinces paired up with staff in one of the adjacent initially targeted provinces. The newly targeted provinces are supported by a mobile team of the project's national staff on an "as needed" basis.

The expectation is that this process of developing SDIPs will be replicated in the three ISIL-controlled provinces on the development of SDIPs. In Year 4, GSP/Taqadum trained these three provinces on post-conflict essential public service restoration, including overall post-conflict disaster management (steps, processes, assessments, prioritizing, etc.); determining the level of hazard vulnerability assessments; creating a "laundry list" of critical infrastructure sites in each province; and selecting a disaster management team.

Three management crisis cells were created in the three ISIL-controlled provinces and their members trained on post-conflict measures. GSP/Taqadum conducted workshops on the subject of post-conflict disaster management in September 2015. The main objective was to build the capacity of these governorates to effectively respond to the urgent needs of their afflicted citizens after ISIL. Part of the output of these training sessions was coming up with a preliminary plan to assist the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) after ISIL. This preliminary plan will be reviewed and refined by an international expert to be ready for execution. The plan is a four-stage strategy starting with Readiness, Immediate Response, Transition, and ending with Stability & Sustainability stages.

VI. LESSONS LEARNED

A. Stakeholder Buy-In

GSP/Taqadum continued to deepen further relationships with central and provincial government officials including the Council of Minister's Secretariat (COMSEC), the Ministry of State for Governorate Affairs (MOSGA), the High Commission for Coordination between Provinces' Secretariat (HCCPSEC), the Prime Minister's Advisory Council (PMAC), the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Work (MMPW), the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Ministry of Health (MOH), Governors and Provincial Councils in the 15 provinces.

GSP/Taqadum has continued cultivating relationships among the highest level of government to build support and consensus for the decentralization road map recommendations of the January 2014 Decentralization Conference. Furthermore, GSP/Taqadum got the support for the decentralization action plan and the eventual transfer of functions to the local government. Changing the mindset of stakeholders is a protracted process that can only be accomplished through multiple interventions. The barriers differ in each province and therefore, maintaining a good understanding of the context in each of the provinces is essential to optimizing project impact. The barriers toward decentralization were more pronounced by the ministries of health and education.

GSP/Taqadum management has learned that involving a greater number of stakeholders in the planning and implementation processes will improve stakeholder buy-in. A key element to stakeholder buy-in is the willingness to participate in the technical assistance provided by GSP/Taqadum. However, GSP/Taqadum has also learned that when senior level buy-in for GSP/Taqadum's activities is obtained from Provincial Councils or Governors, their staff is more willing to apply the practical skills provided by GSP/Taqadum.

B. Transferable Knowledge

GSP/Taqadum management has learned that "learning by doing" by national and embedded technical specialists substantially improves the effectiveness of training activities by providing continual support that enables participants to implement lessons learned on the job.

For efficiency and effectiveness, common issues are addressed in regional or national hands-on workshops. GSP/Taqadum is ensuring that Government of Iraq counterparts are equipped with the tools to identify and solve problems in the long term, not just when GSP/Taqadum is present. GSP/Taqadum is developing financial and administrative structural changes that endure as government actors change from the central ministries to the provinces. The exchange of information among local government creates higher levels of organizational understanding and greater consensus towards common issues. GSP/Taqadum has learned that data sharing strategies from different provinces will help in obtaining consensus and provides a unified view for task force members and sub-committees. Local governments became more independent

and developed more confidence in delivering better services to their people

C. Maintaining the Momentum

GSP/Taqadum has designed the project implementation phase by using the “bottom-up approach.” Working with governorates through GSP/Taqadum embedded offices, we have built consensus among provinces developing a unified vision for the consolidated ICIP. This built support among the provinces to have a unified view in preparation of the August deadline for decentralization. GSP/Taqadum has throughout the process lead from behind offering guidance on how the functions will work under the new decentralized system.

D. Cross-pollination

GSP/Taqadum has established linkages between stakeholders by taking a proactive approach linking officials from different provinces and the central government. GSP/Taqadum has facilitated roundtable discussions toward establishing a mutual understanding on key issues and improving communication and coordination to resolve differences between provinces and the targeted ministries. These meetings have helped all stakeholders agree on the number of functions to be transferred from the three ministries to the provinces. In addition, GSP/Taqadum aims to scale the lessons learned from one province to Iraq’s remaining provinces. This has helped deepen the ties among provinces, encourage officials to learn from one another and identify common challenges. Finding those challenges will enable officials to understand what it will take to confront them, a key element to effective consensus building and lobbying at the national level.

E. Good Analytical Tool

GSP/Taqadum has used a comprehensive approach with well-thought criteria and analysis methodologies to map out functional responsibilities. Provinces and central government have valued GSP/Taqadum's scientific approach when analyzing the ability of the provinces to receive central ministerial functions through the use of the Decentralization Mapping and Analysis Tool.

F. Measuring System for a Better Management

The project has been successful in its application and impact of service delivery performance standards as evidenced by the remedial actions outlined in the short and long term solutions within SDIPs to improve services. In some provinces, this scientific approach of calculating performance standards and indicator values will be used as the basis for preparing the annual investment budget.

VII. LOOKING AHEAD

There is no doubt that interest in GSP/Taqadum's decentralization approach is growing across Iraq to include the other non-target ministries. The overall goal has been and remains, to prepare plans whereby article 45 of law 21 as amended, is implemented. With the August 5 decentralization deadline behind us, Iraq's provinces are on their way to receiving functions transferred from the ministries and manage and deliver services to their people. In addition, they will legislate local laws and prepare and execute operation and investment budgets that take into consideration their local needs regarding citizen-centered services and economic development.

GSP/Taqadum will continue to guide the GOs, PCs, and directorates. One of GSP/Taqadum's roles will be to facilitate the defining and development of management roles, responsibilities, authorities, and relationship between the GO and PC and the GO and the directorates. GSP/Taqadum will work on preparing a mechanism for the transfer of functions and assets from the three targeted ministries to the provinces. GSP/Taqadum will continue to develop the capacity of local governments to be ready to receive the transferred functions and authorities. GSP/Taqadum will continue to define the new roles of the ministries that will be changed from controlling to enabling, from policy and strategic decision making to developing the capacity of local governments. In addition, GSP/Taqadum continues its technical assistance activities with a staff of local governorates.